The Missionary Argument

AND

The Missionary Spirit.

THE MISSIONARY ARGUMENT:

A SERMON

BEFORE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OF THE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY;

PHILADELPHIA, MAY 11, 1830.

[Second Edition.]

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT:

INTRODUCTORY TO

THE EPISCOPAL MISSIONARY LECTURE;

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 27, 1831.

[Second Edition.]

Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, infidels and heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word, and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE MISSIONARY ARGUMENT:

BY

GEORGE W. DOANE, A. M.,

ASSISTANT MINISTER OF TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON.

BOSTON, PRINTED: M DCCC XXX.

BURLINGTON, N. J. REPRINTED: M DCCC XXXV.

J. L. POWELL; MISSIONARY PRESS.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?

THE MISSIONARY ARGUMENT.

ST. MARK, XVI.—15.

GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

This was the parting precept of the Saviour of mankind. He came into the world that all, even as many as should believe in him, *should not perish, but have everlasting life.* During all his painful sojourning on earth he proclaimed himself, in word and in deed, *the light of the world.* And he died, that he might be *the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.* In perfect and entire consistency, then, with the original purpose of his incarnation, with the teaching and practice of his life, with the motive and object of his death, was the parting precept of the Saviour,—GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE! It was addressed originally to the Apostles; and the same page which records it, records also their prompt, implicit, and persevering obedience—*they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.* Did they fulfil the Saviour's precept? Was the Gospel preached by them *to every creature?* Alas, no! They were but mortal men. And though they gave themselves, body and spirit, to the work, they did but sow the precious seed, before they were compelled, by cruel persecution, to enrich it with their blood. The work which they began, they entrusted to faithful men, with power to send others after them; so that from their time until now the sacred line has never once been broken, nor the divine husbandry been interrupted, nor the vineyard of the Lord of hosts ceased to extend to all valleys its gracious roots, and to spread over all hills its comfortable shadow, and to extend to nation after nation, and to kingdom after kingdom, its life-sustaining, life-restoring cup. Still, is the Saviour's purpose yet accomplished? Has it yet gone into *all the world?* Is the

Gospel yet preached *to every creature?* Alas, no! There are myriads of human hearts that are fainting for the protection of its shadow. There are millions of immortal souls that are perishing for the refreshment of its cup of life.

Why is it so?

Ought it to be so?

Shall it continue to be so?

I. Why is it so? Are the means which God has appointed for the extension of his kingdom inadequate to the result? Is his *ear heavy, that it cannot hear?* Or his *hand shortened, that it cannot save?* The supposition is alike injurious to his power and wisdom, his holiness and goodness. He has proclaimed the everlasting Gospel. He has founded the universal Church. The leaves of the one are given *for the healing of the nations.* The gates of the other are open to kingdoms, and tongues, and kindreds, and people. In her divinely instituted, and perpetuated ministry, the glorious vision of the Seer of the Apocalypse is realized—*and I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment has come!* In her divinely instituted and perpetuated sacraments, the graeious voiee, that, on the Isle of Patmos, won his favoured ear, addresses all mankind—*the Spirit and the Bride say, come! and let him that heareth, say* to his neighbour, *come! and let him that is athirst come! and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely!* Why then, the question returns—why, since God has made provision so ample for the spiritual wants of all, his holy Church freely opened, his holy word freely offered, why is it that all are not participants of its preeious privileges, subjeets of its constraining love, heirs of its immortal hopes? The noble argument of the great first Missionary to the Gentiles will supply our answer. True, he says, *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him, and there is no differenee between the Jew and the Greek. But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a*

preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? Alas! brethren, that it should be so—but so it is—the lapse of nearly two thousand years has abated scarce a single jot from this unanswerable apostolic reasoning for the claims of Missions. There are yet whole nations, and I had almost said whole continents, of them who call not upon God because they do not believe on him, who believe not on him because they never heard of him, who cannot hear of him without a preacher, and who can have no preacher unless he shall be sent. And there are others, countless others, of our flesh and of our bone, who, though, in the pleasant land of their fathers they may have heard of God, and, even among the heathen who know him not, or the wicked who disregard him, do still believe in him and fear him, are losing, as the rainbow fades, the impressions which even we, with all our means of grace, so faintly and so feebly hold, and, far from home, and all its holy and delightful sympathies, are longing till their very heart is sick within them, for those sacred ministrations of comfort and of hope, which, without a preacher they cannot have, and to whom no preacher can go unless he shall be sent. The subject, then, you see, my Christian brethren, is brought home to us—to you, and to me—and, when we ask, why it is that souls are perishing for lack of saving knowledge, it becomes us also to ask,—and that solemnly, and anxiously, as in the presence of Him who has declared, *all souls are mine*—are we doing what we can for their relief? Have we given according to the ability with which God has blessed us? Have we exerted, in the furtherance of his own cause, the ability and influence with which God has endowed us? Have we poured out upon it—this at least all of us can do, and God forbid that any of us should not!—have we poured out upon it, warm from the heart, our fondest and most fervent prayers? If it be not so, if for Christ's own cause, the cause in which he shed his precious blood, the Christian's wealth, the Christian's efforts, the Christian's prayers are stinted, there needs, assuredly, no further question why it does not triumph, to God's glory, and the good of men.

II. But we ask, secondly, OUGHT IT TO BE SO? Is there any thing that can excuse the believer for being a laggard in his Master's service? Let us speak plainly out!—the occasion calls for plainness—is it possible that he can be sincere in his profession of the Chris-

tian faith, who hesitates to promote, to the utmost of his ability, remembering that to God the heart is as open as the hand, the extension of its privileges and blessings to all who have them not at all, or who have them in inferior measure to himself? We answer boldly, no! And we rest our answer on the warrant of God's word —*he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* And, again, *whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* —For consider, I beseech you, brethren, the worth, as God himself has rated it, even of a single soul;—*what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*—Consider, next, the state of all souls by nature;—*we have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. There is none that doeth good, no, not one!* —Consider, then, the sure punishment of sin;—*the soul that sinneth, it shall die. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil!*—Take then into consideration the price at which all souls were ransomed;—*God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life—who bare our sins in his own body on the tree—and, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man!*—Consider, lastly, the conditions of the law of Gospel love;—*thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others—for no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another!* Consider well, my brethren, this affecting exhibition of true Christian fellowship, as a relation so intimate that the vitality of its union can only be expressed by representing Jesus as the head, the Church as his body, and individual Christians as members in particular, one in feeling and interest, one in joy and grief, one in fears and hopes; and then say, if the love of Christ should not—nay, if, where it exists in purity and power, it certainly will not—constrain all who breathe and feel it, to the same anxiety, the same exertions, the same intense, unsparing, and agonizing devotion for the salvation of other souls as of

their own! Say, finally, if that man who has neglected any effort, spared of his perishable treasure, or remitted in his effectual, fervent intercession for the souls of all mankind, and much more of those who fall within the sphere of his immediate influence, can justly entertain the slightest hope of acceptance with Him, who has declared that he will judge all men according as they have judged, and by that strict, yet equitable, rule, of doing unto others as they would have others do to them!

III. Having seen clearly why it is that the extension of the Saviour's kingdom upon earth has been, and is, so slow; and that, by every principle of Christian duty and of Christian charity, it ought not so to be, we are prepared for our third question—SHALL IT CONTINUE TO BE SO? That the march of our religion shall go on, that the triumphs of Christianity shall continue and increase in glory, that the kingdom of the Saviour shall not be stayed, as it were, in mid-air, but shall come down to earth, and spread its peaceful sway from the one end of it to the other, filling it all *with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea*, enabling all to *know the Lord, from the least to the greatest*, and pouring into all hearts *the blessing of peace, quietness and assurance forever*, is among the clearest convictions to which the word of God gives warrant. God's work, then, will go on. His cause will prosper. Christianity will triumph. And our question is thus narrowed down to this—shall his work be done by us? Shall his cause prosper in our hands? Shall we share in the triumphs and partake the glories of the Cross? Or, laggards in our exertions, and niggards of our bounty, in the day of trial and of toil, shall we be rejected in that day when the spoils of victory shall be divided, and its glorious golden crowns bestowed? For, brethren, understand me well. I come not here to summon you to duties, which, with unwilling hand, you may, upon compulsion, do. I come not here to call on you for sacrifices, which, with reluctant heart, you may surrender by constraint. But, no! I come to lead your free and fervent spirits to the most glorious and inviting enterprize of which mortals ever were allowed to hear; to give you the offer of privileges which no price can estimate, and of rewards which will endure forever; to ask you but to turn the light of that blessed Gospel, which cheers and guides your way, towards the groping multitudes that

wander on in darkness, and the shadow of the grave, and to tell you that God has declared, that they who thus turn sinners to righteousness, shall *shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and forever.* And, though I repeat it, that Jesus Christ will have nothing of you in this behalf as matter of mere necessity and duty, nothing which is not won from you by the soft persuasion of your constraining love of him, nothing that is not done by you for his sake and for the love of souls; and that all that is so given and done will be acknowledged and rewarded as given and done to him, *inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did unto me;*—I am also bound to add, that he will frown in his indignant anger, and repel from him forever, all those, who, disregarding the cry of the poor, darkened souls for whom he died, shall in effect despise his Cross, and disregard the offering of his blood—*verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.*

My Christian brethren, in coming before you to-night as the advocate of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church, I am well aware that with some—of you we are persuaded better things—the office is unhonoured, and the errand thankless; —that, to the infidel, the whole Missionary scheme is odious;— and that there are even Christians who will abate somewhat from their estimate of his discretion and intelligence, who bears and owns a love and zeal for Missions. But I remember, and am not discouraged, that the Cross of Jesus was *to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.* I remember, and am not discouraged, that Paul, for his Christian earnestness and boldness, was accounted mad. And that with the heathen of the first ages of the Church, it was a current taunt, "a very good man that, only he is a Christian!" Now, from the infidel, these things are reasonably to be expected. He has declared war against Christianity, and he is, of course, opposed to all that is part and parcel of it; and with a degree of violence exactly in proportion to its intrinsic excellence, and its importance to the cause. But, when the reproach is heard from Christian lips, is it from ignorance—an ignorance, how needless and unpardonable!—or is it from entire and

utter selfishness, hardening the heart, till it can seek to save of the perishable dross of earth, even at the price of other souls, and of its own? For, brethren, what is the meaning of this mystic and misrepresented term? What is a Mission? What is a Missionary? What is the Missionary enterprize?—Was not the Son of God the great first Missionary, from the bosom of his Father, to our fallen race? Is not the world one great, dark, devious Missionary field? Were not the holy city, the hill of Calvary, the mountain Olivet, the earliest Missionary stations? Are not the ministers of Jesus Missionaries all? And is not our religion all a Mission—a message, so denominated by the angels, of *glad tidings to all people*—a mission sent from heaven, the endearing proof of God's paternal love—a mission sent to men, his erring children, to guide their feet here in the way of peace, and lead them through the darkness of the grave to happiness in heaven?—And is the Missionary enterprize, then, an idle undertaking? Is the name of Missionary a dishonourable name? Is it a reproach to be the friend, the advocate, the humblest of the servants of Missions?—Then welcome dishonour, if it be incurred in Jesus' cause! Welcome reproach, if it be shared with Luke and Barnabas and Paul! *God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!* God forbid that we should count labour unwelcome, or reproach opprobrious, or our life itself dear unto us, so we may but proclaim to sinners, poor and needy, the unsearchable riches of the Gospel of Christ!

It ought not to be withheld that there is, by those who discountenance the cause of Missions—strange indeed that in a Christian land there should be any such!—some show of seeming argument. For, say they, if the heathen have not the Gospel, or if some Christians live less in the light of it than others, then they have less to answer for; since a God of justice and of mercy will never judge them by a rule of which they could not know. We account as highly as they can of the justice and of the goodness of God. We believe, and we tremble to believe it, that the rule of His judgment will strictly be, *of him to whom much is given much will be required.* We doubt not that *in every nation he who feareth God and worketh righteousness* will be accepted *with Him.* But we repeat with emphasis the searching and decisive question which

has been often asked before, where, in a heathen nation, is he found who feareth God and worketh righteousness? We ask, if, in our high, meridian, Gospel day, there is too much light upon the path of duty, or the bed of death? And we ask, if, with all the advantages and consolations which he enjoys, the Christian *scarcely be saved*, how shall the poor heathen, or the half enlightened convert, or the forest exile from his father's home and house of prayer, prepare to meet his God? But the argument proves too much, and so proves nothing. It might with as much reason be contended that the whole world needed not the Gospel—that God has sent his Son to die for men who might have been saved as well without the sacrifice—and that the Holy Spirit, poured out from heaven to sanctify the faithful, is poured out all to waste. My brethren, it is not so. The heathen, bowing down to wood and stone, are perishing for lack of knowledge. Our brethren, pioneers of civilization and of the Church, are languishing in sorrow for the want of spiritual light and spiritual consolation. Even in the midst of us, the poor are famishing for the bread, and thirsting for the water, of life.

Now surely, brethren, if these things are so, and if they are of concern to us, they are of urgent concern, they press for our immediate attention, there is no time to be lost. While we are thinking, or, perhaps, not thinking, of the matter, thousands of heathens are going down to the grave, without a ray of hope to light its passage; and others, who, in better days have known and valued the consolations of religion, are falling from their hold upon its precious truths,—are fainting and dying, alone and unconsoled. And besides, brethren, let it not be forgotten, our own *time is short*. *While we have opportunity*, then, *let us do good*. What we do we must do quickly, *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave*, to which we hasten.

In the plea which I have thus sought to urge before you in behalf of Missions, I have not recognized any distinction of foreign or domestic operations. Why should I? Is not *the field*, THE WORLD? Let every man choose his portion of it to reap for the Lord's garner. Only let all choose some. Whatever is done, is done for God's glory, and the good of souls. Done with a single eye to those great ends, God will accept it, and bless it with in-

crease. The Society which claims our prayers wisely and happily combines in one the foreign and the domestic interest. God forbid that they should ever be divided! God forbid that where his blessed Son made no distinction, we should think it needful! He died alike for all the souls of men. God forbid that our bounty, our labours, our intercessions should not also comprehend them all! Individual designation, and the force of circumstances, may give to the one object or to the other occasional predominance. But the constraining love of Jesus is a motive which prompts alike to both, and both look but to a common end, the salvation of sinners for whom Jesus died. With "ample room, and verge enough" in each direction, to engage us all, let us give to each its full proportion of our best and most disinterested zeal. Ages must pass, even were the whole strength of Christendom brought out, before the fulness of the Gentiles can come in. Generations must be numbered before the Church, in her best human enterprize, can overtake, with her Master's holy word and ordinances, the rapid march of civilization towards the ocean of the West.

Meanwhile, what are we, Protestant Episcopalians, doing in this great cause of God and man? What regions of the dark Pagan world have we undertaken to enlighten? What portion of our own vast wilderness have we pledged ourselves to reclaim? On what part of the dreary African coast are our Missionary stations set, as light-bearers to the degraded Ethiopian? Where, in the barren wastes of Asia, or in our own magnificent and verdant woods, is the voice of our Missionary heard, speaking peace to the sorrowing, and pardon to the sinful soul? What is the number of societies, to spread the Gospel to all who have it not, that, like a constellation, gladden with their concentrated glory all our land? And by what sums, in thousands and in tens of thousands, is their income told?—Had these questions been asked twelve months ago, I must have hung my head to answer them. I must have told you, that in all the world, Christian or heathen, there was not an effort making that deserved the name, which had its origin with us; and must have been compelled to the confession, full of sorrow and of shame, that the average annual income of the only institution in the whole American Church for general Missionary purposes, had been, in the last nine years, but fifteen hundred dollars! But, blessed

be the name of God, a day of better things has dawned! The favour of the Holy One has crowned with signal mercy the exertions which his own gracious Spirit has put it into the hearts of the faithful servants of his Church to make. The adoption of a plan, not more to be admired for its beautiful simplicity, than for its comprehensiveness and power, has breathed into the seat of central life a new vitality, and sent to every limb, and member, and organ of the whole frame a more intense, concentrated and vigorous action. There is the beginning of an organization made, which soon, we fondly trust, will be commensurate with our whole communion; and like the circumambient air, while, by its moderate and equal pressure, it is nowhere felt, shall stimulate to healthful and enduring energy the universal system, even in its minutest portions. The reproach is wiped away—thank God! the reproach is wiped away—that Protestant Episcopalians are indifferent to the extension of the blessings of the Gospel;—I do not say to their brethren and immediate neighbours alone,—but to any, to all, who have them not. The spirit of Missions has gone abroad. We mark its first, we frankly own its faintest symptom, in the replenishing treasury of the Lord. I say, its faintest symptom. For, needful as the gold is and the silver to the preaching of the priceless Gospel, these are not the ends to which we look, nor the results for which we labour, nor the blessings for which we pray. No!—there are treasures far more rare, far more precious, far more desirable. The heart, filled with the love of God and man, prompting the gift, the act, the prayer of charity—this is the choicest jewel, out of the mediatorial diadem of Jesus. The spirit of Missions, the spirit of celestial, of evangelical love, the flame enkindled by the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier—this is the ray by which, as gold is ripened in the mine, such hearts are formed. Give it free course, then, brethren, that it may be fully glorified! Prompt it by wish, and word, and act. Seek its promotion by the kindling breath of fervent prayer, till it fill all hearts, and burn in every soul. It will pour you out treasures freely, as the water is poured out from heaven. It will do more than this. It will pour you out HEARTS—hearts like the martyr Stephen's, filled full *with faith and with the Holy Ghost*, to labour in the work of saving souls, to bear every where the word and bread of life, to live and die, true Christian soldiers, beneath the banner of the Cross.

My Christian brethren, the spirit of Missions is the spirit of our religion—emphatically, it is the spirit of our Church. It fired the Apostles' hearts at first to plant it. It ever since has fired the hearts of their successors to tend and water it. It has been kept like a pure vestal flame upon the altars of the Church of England. It sent her Middleton and Heber to India. It has carried her evangelists and teachers wherever the foot of man has trod. It brought to the land which we inherit, and inhabit, the faith and worship in which our souls rejoice. Friends, brethren, and fathers, shall we not acknowledge, shall we not repay the pious debt? Shall we not transmit to others, and still to others, even to generations unnumbered and unborn, the rich inheritance which we enjoy? Let us arise, then, in the strength and name of God, and gird ourselves, like men, for the performance of this most glorious, this most charitable work! The experience of the year just closed demonstrates that there is not wanting the ability, nor yet the inclination to discharge it. It is knowledge that we need—it is system—it is union, and purpose, and untiring perseverance in action. The plan before us offers them. Its success, thus far, gives pledge and promise of its future efficacy. Let us accept, let us pursue, the glorious, the auspicious omen. *For Zion's sake let us not hold our peace, and for Jerusalem's sake let us not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth!* Above all, brethren and fathers, let us pour out before the Giver of increase our fervent and untiring prayers, that he would be pleased to *make his ways known unto all men, his saving health to all nations;*—that the light of his glorious Gospel may shine unto all lands, and that, "all who receive it may live as becomes it;"—that He would "have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of his word, and so fetch them home to his flock, that they," and we, may be saved with the remnant of the true Israelites, and made one fold under the "one" great "Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Let the light of the
Gospel shine upon all
nations, and may as
many as have received
it, live as becomes it.